

flowers, leaves, and scented herbs not only at festivals but on other occasions which to the European might seem inappropriate for such gay ornaments. But in truth the bright blossoms and verdant foliage are not intended to decorate the wearer but to endow him with certain magical virtues, which are supposed to inhere in the flowers and leaves. Thus one man may be seen strutting about with a wreath of greenery which passes round his neck and droops over his shoulders, back, and breast. He is not a mere dandy, but a lover who hopes that the wreath will work as a charm on a woman's heart. Again, another may be observed with a bunch of the red dracaena leaves knotted round his neck and the long stalk hanging down his back. He is a soldier, and these leaves are supposed to make him invulnerable. But if the lover should fail to win the affections of his swarthy mistress, if the warrior should be wounded in battle, it never occurs to either of them to question the magical virtue of the charm; they ascribe the failure either to the more potent charm of another magician or to some oversight on their own part.¹ On the theory that wreaths and garlands serve as amulets to protect the wearer against the powers of evil we can understand not only why in antiquity sacred persons such as priests and kings wore crowns, but also why dead bodies, sacrificial victims, and in certain circumstances even inanimate objects such as the implements of sacrifice, the doors of houses, and so forth, were decorated or rather guarded by wreaths.² Further, on this hypothesis we may perhaps perceive why children of living parents were specially chosen to cut or wear sacred wreaths. Since such children were apparently supposed to be endowed with a more than common share of vital energy_s they might be deemed peculiarly fitted to make or wear amulets which were designed to protect the wearer from injury and death: the current of life which circulated in their own veins overflowed, as it were, and reinforced the magic virtue of the wreath. For the same

reason such children would naturally be chosen to personate gods, as they seemingly were at Delphi and Thebes.

At Ephesus, if we may trust the evidence of the Greek romance-writer, Heliodorus, a boy and girl of living parents used to hold for a year the priesthood of Apollo and Artemis respectively. When their ^{lvm} ~~acting~~

¹ R. Parkinson, *Dreissigjahre in der Sudsee* (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 150-152. and so did the

"On the use of crowns and wreaths he tried a homi- in classical antiquity see W. Smith's *Constitution of Athens*, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquity*; these cases because (*Jtillies* i. 545 *sqq.*, s.v. "Corona"; conflict with the theory E. Saylio, v.zj. "Corona," in Ch. Darem- accordance with which hero- el. E. Saglio's *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Komaines*, iii. wearer against ghosts 1520 *sq.* In time of mourning the blood.

ancients laid aside xv. 16, p. 675 A); king at Athens when cide (Aristotle, 57). I mention they seem to in the text, in crowns might be to protect the and the pollution of